

Muskellunge

Esox masquinongy



Similar Species: Tiger muskellunge, northern pike

Identification: Six or more pores on lower jaw, upper half of cheeks scaled, dark vertical solid or broken bars on light background.

The muskellunge is related to the northern pike and is known by anglers as the “fish of 10,000 casts.” Muskellunge are primarily found in the midwestern U.S. and southern Canada but have been introduced elsewhere. In South Dakota, muskellunge have been stocked into Lake Amsden in the northeastern part of the state and into the lower portion of the Missouri River. Muskellunge do not reach the same level of population density as northern pike. They are sedentary, lurking predators that feed primarily on other fish. Muskellunge spawn in spring, slightly later than northern pike, and the eggs are scattered over dead vegetation in shallow water. They should not be confused with tiger muskellunge, which are hybrids between muskellunge and northern pike that have been stocked elsewhere in the state.

